

# Introduction

This is the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Department of Defense (DoD) report describing U.S. military personnel. The goal of the *Population Representation in the Military Services* (Pop Rep) report is to provide the most up-to-date, reliable, and consistent data on military personnel for policy-makers, the media, and the general public.<sup>1</sup>

Today's recruiting environment is good. For the last two years, the Services have experienced banner recruiting years. Several factors are affecting this success. While, regrettably, economic uncertainty permeates the nation's collective thinking and unemployment remains relatively high, this operates to the advantage of those who are hiring, including the U.S. military. Times like this make recruiting less challenging than it might otherwise be. In addition, our overseas commitments have improved significantly, and there is more positive media coverage of the wars than in previous years.

There are other factors, however, that continue to challenge the Services' abilities to attract bright, young Americans into the Armed Forces: the lower likelihood of influencers of youth (e.g., parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and coaches) recommending service; high numbers of youth going directly to college from high school; the continuing concerns about the prolonged and irregular worldwide campaign with its concomitant high operational tempo; and a large and growing proportion of today's youth who are ineligible to serve in the military.

With respect to the proportion of youth ineligible to serve, we should not lose sight of the fact that, although the overall youth population is large, only a relatively small proportion of American youth is qualified to enlist. Over one-third of youth (35 percent) have a medical disqualification, with obesity a large contributing factor. Drug or alcohol abuse removes 18 percent, and another 23 percent do not meet our standards for reasons such as criminal misbehavior, low aptitude scores, or having more dependents than can reliably be accommodated in the early career. This leaves only 25 percent that are eligible to serve.<sup>2</sup> If we subtract the estimated 10 percent who are qualified but attending college we are left with only 15 percent of the youth population who are eligible and available to serve.

Therefore, we are in uncharted waters, with significant factors – both negative and positive – directly affecting military recruiting efforts and, in turn, military readiness. Although the recruiting environment today is good, we know that tough recruiting periods will return. If we enter these difficult periods with insufficient resources, it will exacerbate the problem and contribute to the “boom and bust” recruiting cycle characteristic of the

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<sup>1</sup>*Population Representation in the Military Services* summaries and appendixes for FY97 through FY09 are online at <http://prhome.defense.gov/MPP/ACCESSION%20POLICY/poprep.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> These percentages are based on calculations found in the following two reports from The Lewin Group: (1) Carol Moore et al. *Qualified Military Available: New Estimates of the Eligible Youth Population*. Apr. 2005; and (2) Rita Furst Seifert et al. *Estimating Qualified Military Available. Final Report*. Nov. 2007.

past. While some fluctuation is desirable, if resources are inadequate when recruiting becomes challenging, failure may occur. It is quick and easy to cut budgets during successful recruiting periods. It is very difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to “ramp back up” during difficult recruiting periods, particularly so for advertising and recruiters, which are used to affect both youth and influencer awareness, attitudes, and the propensity to enlist. We must be vigilant and learn from the past, when fluctuating resources – up in tough recruiting environments, down in favorable ones – caused recruiting failure and jeopardized military readiness.

The FY10 technical appendixes (A through E), located on the Pop Rep website, provide current data on the demographics, including education and aptitude, of new recruits, enlisted personnel, and officers of the active and reserve components (AC and RC), as well as historical data for selected demographic and service-related characteristics. Except where otherwise noted, data are provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

In this summary report, we highlight recent and historical personnel trends in the DoD services (the Army, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, and the Navy) and the U.S. Coast Guard, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security. We look at both the AC and the RC in all services. This report describes demographic characteristics of applicants, accessions, enlisted personnel, and officers, referencing data from the tables in the technical appendixes, as well as from previous Pop Rep reports.

Furthermore, in this year’s summary, we include a section focusing on non-citizens in the military. Non-citizens have been a recent topic of interest because of the continued need for people with language and cultural skills critical to the war effort and the implementation of the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program, which allows some legal temporary residents to enter U.S. military service. Recent debates over the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would allow children brought to the United States illegally, to obtain conditional permanent residency after military service or college attendance, have also garnered public interest in the non-citizen population.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows: In section I, we present an overall summary of the armed services. Sections II and III cover the DoD’s AC and RC, respectively. In section IV, we discuss the U.S. Coast Guard. The special focus section, section V, describes non-citizen servicemembers in terms of accessions and their overall number in the DoD services.